

I would like to thank Governor Huntsman and Ms. Nielsen for their roles in calling and organizing this meeting, and giving Utahns a chance to speak publicly. These comments represent my own opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of any of the organizations named.

In early April 2006, there was little in the media about Divine Strake, except for James Tegnalia's ill-considered remark about a mushroom cloud that could be seen from Las Vegas. The Western Shoshone Defense Project and Shundahai Network put together a press release about what we did know, focusing on 3 points: the potential danger to those living downwind, the potential for this test to be used to develop special tactical nuclear weapons, and the continued illegality of testing anything at the Nevada Test Site. Then, we joined with a handful of others to form the Stop Divine Strake Coalition, and invited other organizations.

Over the next 6 weeks, over 4 dozen organizations worldwide joined the coalition, around these 3 points. These included indigenous rights, downwinder, anti-nuclear and peace and social justice groups. We were interviewed by Italian, British and Spanish media. Even Al-Jazeera covered this story. We learned that this test is of concern not just to those who live downwind, but to concerned citizens worldwide.

I'm sure that the health and safety issues will be well-covered this evening. I would like to focus on the other 2 points.

There is wide agreement among weapons experts, including the Federation of American Scientists, that this test will be used to develop metrics for the deployment of new tactical nuclear weapons, such as "bunker busters." Indeed, the initial budget stated that the intent of the test was "to improve the warfighter's confidence in selecting the smallest proper nuclear yield necessary to destroy underground facilities while minimizing collateral damage."

The Department of Energy is currently considering proposals to revamp the existing nuclear arsenal with a proposal called the Reliable Replacement Warhead. This is related to a larger plan called the Complex 2030, which would revamp the entire US weapons complex, allowing for a new generation of nuclear weapons. By the terms of the Non-proliferation Treaty, the US and other nuclear weapons states are obligated to drawing down their arsenals towards eventual abolition. Mohammad ElBaradei of the IAEA has recently restated that this is the essential goal of the NPT. What message is sent to the rest of the world when the US not only does not draw down its nuclear force, but actively (with Complex 2030) and subtly (with Divine Strake) moves forward with plans to upgrade its nuclear capacity. Already, other nations are following suit; 8 nations are testing ICBMs, 2 are upgrading their nuclear submarine fleets, and currently non-nuclear states such as the Arab States are claiming their need for nuclear "power." In today's climate of international tension, this test is provocative and ill-advised.

What is also a concern is the rule of law. The US considers itself subject to not only its own laws, but the treaties it signs with other nations, including the Charter of the United Nations. The US criticizes nations such as North Korea and Iran as acting outside the "community of nations" for its alleged violations of UN resolutions and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Yet the US regularly violates UN resolutions and violates the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, the US violates its own laws, particularly the treaties it signs with native peoples. The Nevada Test site sits on land that by the terms of the Treaty of Ruby Valley of 1863 is part of the Western Shoshone Nation. The US seized this land, essentially through eminent domain, to create the Nevada Test Site, citing that "gradual encroachment" by non-Western Shoshone settlers meant that the Western Shoshone no longer held title to this land.

The Western Shoshone have sought peaceful redress of their land claims for years, and have been denied any audience within the US. Finally, they went to the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In March of 2006, the UN CERD committee directed that the US should "cease," "freeze" and "stop" its activities on Western Shoshone land, including the activities at the Nevada Test Site. To date, the US has not complied with this directive, nor has it prepared a compliance report.

In closing, I have 2 questions to ask Utahns tonight. Given our history, and the numerous victims of radiation poisoning, are you willing to see thousands, even millions of innocent Iranian civilians poisoned or killed if these weapons are developed and deployed? Do we respect the rule of law, and expect that our own country will honor its treaties and obligations, including UN-resolutions and directives, arms reduction treaties and treaties with native peoples? If you can answer yes to either of these questions, I hope that you will consider sending in written comments on these two issues, to the White House, to the Department of Defense, and to the Defense Threat Reduction agency, in addition to your concerns on the Environmental Assessment at hand. More information on these issues, as well as decision maker addresses may be found on the Shundahai Network website on the Divine Strake link. There are also flyers in the lobby.

Thank you.

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